

REMARKS

Claims 12, 13, 15-20, 22-26, 28-31, 33-38, 40, 41 and 43-46 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 12, 13, 15, 16, 22, 28, 37 and 38 are amended.

No new matter is added.

I. Claim Objections

Claims 12, 13, 15-20, 22-26, 28-38, 40, 41 and 43-46 are objected to for informalities. The objection to previously canceled claim 32 is moot. The objection of claims 12, 13, 15-20, 22-26, 28-31, 33-38, 40, 41 and 43-46 is respectfully traversed.

The Office Action asserts that "[i]n electrophotography, the term developing container is used to represent an entire developer container. Applicant can not use this term in opposition to how it is normally used in the industry, please choose non-conflicting terminology for both the claims and specification" (see Office Action, page 2). By this Amendment, claims 12, 15, 16, 22, 28, 37 and 38 are amended as suggested by the Office Action, to now recite "toner chamber." Applicants respectfully submit that objected-to claims 13, 17-20, 23-26, 29-31, 33-36, 40, 41 and 43-46 do not recite the term "developing agent container" and thus should not be objected to. Further, Applicants respectfully submit that the specification currently discloses the term "toner chamber" and thus no correction should be required.

Regarding the Office Action's objections to the recited locations of the developing agent carrier, supply device, developing agent container (now the toner chamber) and first wall, Applicants respectfully refer the Examiner to Fig. 2 and the corresponding disclosure in the specification, for example, at paragraphs [0039]-[0067], together with the new recitation of the feature "toner chamber" rather than "developing agent container." Should confusion still arise despite the amended claims, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner telephone the attorney of record at the number included below.

Applicants thus respectfully request withdrawal of the objections.

II. §102(b) Rejection of Claims 12, 13, 15, 18-20, 22, 23, 25, 26, 28-34, 37, 38, 40, 41 and 43-46 Over Goto

The Office Action rejects claims 12, 13, 15, 18-20, 22, 23, 25, 26, 28-34, 37, 38, 40, 41 and 43-46 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over Goto et al. (JP 2001-272854). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Goto does not teach every claimed feature of independent claims 12, 15, 22, 28 and 38. Goto does not teach "a second wall having a first end disposed near a facing position of the developing agent and the layer thickness regulating member over the layer thickness regulating member when the developing device is mounted in the image forming apparatus, the second wall having the second end opposite of the first end, the second wall being inclined with the first end lower than the second end," as recited in independent claim 12 and as similarly recited in independent claims 15, 22, 28 and 38 (emphasis added).

The Office Action asserts that the regulating member 15 of Goto corresponds to the claimed layer thickness regulating member of independent claims 15, 22, 28 and 38 (see Office Action, page 3). While no specific support is provided for the alleged second wall, the only wall of Goto with a first end disposed near a facing position of the developing agent and the layer thickness regulating member, as recited in independent claims 15, 22, 28 and 38, would be the regulating member 15 itself (see Figs. 5 and 6). Even with this overbroad interpretation of the claimed "second wall," Figs. 5 and 6 of Goto disclose the alleged first end (disposed near the facing position of the developing agent and the regulating member 15) as being higher than the alleged second end (opposite to the alleged first end) (see Figs. 5 and 6 of Goto). Therefore, Goto does not teach the second wall of independent claims 15, 22, 28 and 38.

Further, Goto does not teach "a second wall extending from the rear wall with a free end contacting the regulating blade at a side opposite where the regulating blade contacts the developing roller, wherein where the second end is joined to the rear wall is closer to the toner chamber than where the free end of the second wall contacts the regulating blade," as recited in independent claim 18 (emphasis added).

The Office Action asserts that the regulating member 15 of Goto corresponds to the claimed layer thickness regulating member. Again, while no specific support is provided for the alleged second wall, the only wall of Goto with a free end contacting the alleged regulating member 15, as recited in independent claim 18, would be the regulating member 15 itself (see Figs. 5 and 6). However, as shown in Figs. 5 and 6 of Goto, the end of the regulating member 15 joined to a rear wall (i.e. the alleged second end) is disposed farther away from any alleged toner chamber than the end that contacts the regulating member 15 (i.e. the alleged first end) (see Figs. 5 and 6). Therefore, Goto does not disclose "the second end is joined to the rear wall is closer to the toner chamber than where the free end of the second wall contacts the regulating blade," as recited in independent claim 18 (emphasis added).

Therefore, for at least these reasons, independent claims 12, 15, 18, 22, 28 and 38 are patentable over Goto. Claims 13, 17-20, 23, 25, 26, 29-34, 37, 40, 41 and 43-46, which variously depend from independent claims 12, 15, 18, 22, 28 and 38, are also patentable for at least their dependency on independent claims 12, 15, 18, 22, 28 and 38, as well as for the additional features they recite. Applicants thus respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection.

III. §102(b) Rejection of Claims 12, 13, 22, 23, 25 and 29-31 Over Eun et al.

The Office Action rejects claims 12, 13, 22, 23, 25 and 29-31 over Eun et al. (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0118374). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Eun does not teach every claimed feature of independent claims 12 and 22. Eun does not teach "a first wall that covers the entire supply device and prevents a weight of the developing agent contained in the toner chamber from directly acting in a vertical direction on an entirety of the supply device," as recited in independent claim 12; and "a first wall that is disposed between the toner chamber and the supply device and covers the entirety of the supply device," as recited in independent claim 22 (emphasis added).

The Office Action asserts that, as previously recited, only require a first wall to cover any portion of the supply device (see Office Action, page 13). However, claims 12 and 22 are amended to recite that the first wall covers the entire supply device, thereby overcoming the Office Action's interpretation. Further, as shown in Figs. 3-5 of Eun, the alleged supply device 114 is not entirely covered in the vertical direction by any wall. Therefore, Eun does not teach the first wall of independent claims 12 and 22.

Therefore, for at least these reasons, independent claims 12 and 22 are patentable over Eun. Claims 13, 23, 25 and 29-31, which variously depend from independent claims 12 and 22, are also patentable for at least their dependency on independent claims 12 and 22, as well as for the additional features they recite. Applicants thus respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection.

IV. Rejections of the Dependent Claims

Claims 26, 36 and 41-43 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Eun in view of Takiguchi et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,137,796); claims 16, 17, 24 and 35 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Goto in view of Ishii et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,594,462); and claims 16, 17, 24 and 35 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Eun in view of Ishii. The rejections are respectfully traversed.

Takiguchi and Ishii do not remedy the above-described deficiencies of Goto and Eun. Further, claims 16, 17, 24, 26, 35, 36 and 41-43 variously depend from independent claims 12

and 15. Therefore, claims 16, 17, 24, 26, 35, 36 and 41-43 are patentable for at least their dependency on independent claims 12 and 15, as well as for the additional features they recite. Applicants thus respectfully request withdrawal of the rejections.

V. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,


James A. Oliff
Registration No. 27,075

Patrick T. Muffo
Registration No. 60,342

JAO:PTM/hs

Date: March 12, 2009

Attachment:
Petition for Extension of Time

OLIFF & BERRIDGE, PLC
P.O. Box 320850
Alexandria, Virginia 22320-4850
Telephone: (703) 836-6400

<p>DEPOSIT ACCOUNT USE AUTHORIZATION Please grant any extension necessary for entry; Charge any fee due to our Deposit Account No. 15-0461</p>
--